

The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

19 March 1984

[redacted]
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

STAT

[redacted]
292 Main Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142

STAT

Dear [redacted]

STAT

For the last several weeks I have been developing the concept for a National Intelligence Estimate on Soviet Sciences. In many ways it would be a complement to the recently completed one which was on the subject of technologies and would be a "first" such Estimate. The planned Estimate would attempt to assess the status of Soviet sciences and future trends. In addition it would include an estimate of the quality of the scientists and their education, and the facilities and instrumentation with which they work. An important feature would be to identify at an early stage those young scientists who would become the wave of the future in the Soviet Union. I have discussed this idea with a number of S&T policymakers, R&D managers, and persons within our Community. Most believe it would be a very worthwhile document and would have many advantages. I am now in the process of trying to develop the best way to handle the Estimate, and here is where I would appreciate very much receiving your help.

Because our Community normally does very little work in assessing foreign sciences, it would be nearly impossible for us to prepare a creditable Estimate without significant assistance from the academic community. For us to send terms of reference to the other components of the Community in the usual way and expect meaningful responses would be largely unproductive. We are, therefore, developing an entirely different approach to the problem.

This first Estimate will be scoped to address only a manageable number of areas in the physical sciences. It seems that the best approach would be to assess those physical sciences where the Soviets have historically demonstrated a high level of expertise, which in large part would include those which seem to have some potential for application. It also seems reasonable to include mathematics but only those areas which might be directly applied to one or more of the scientific areas selected.

My first request is to ask for your ideas about which scientific areas should be included. I believe that about six or eight would be the approximate number which we would address. Certain ideas that have been suggested include: hydrodynamics, oceanographic and atmospheric sciences, optics and atomic physics, plasma physics, fast reaction chemistry, E-M sciences, and selected areas of mathematics. Areas of science such as general relativity and astrophysics would probably not be included.

The plan is to appoint a senior official in the Community to join with a highly respected scientist from outside the Community to have face-to-face interviews with a significant number of the top US scientists who are known to have an excellent understanding of Soviet science and scientists within their field. Based on these interviews, the Estimate would be drafted by a scientific analyst who would also normally have been present. The material from the interview would for practical purposes be unclassified. The DCI has appointed [redacted] whom you know, to be the principal internal official on the project. We are now looking for an appropriate external person, who would under contract, identify persons to be interviewed, attend many of the interviews with Herb and the scientific analyst, evaluate the product, and supervise the drafting of the Estimate.

STAT

My second request, therefore, is to ask for the names of those persons you believe would be qualified and would have the time available to join Herb on this project. Discussions with Gordon led to suggestions of persons such as: [redacted]

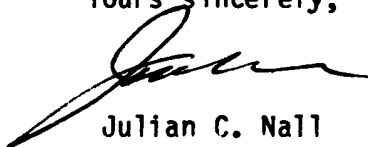
STAT
STAT

[redacted] We estimate that the total amount of time to be involved is approximately three months over a six-month period.

I look forward to hearing from you at an early date either by letter or phone - [redacted] My thanks to you as always.

STAT

Yours sincerely,



Julian C. Nall